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AUTHOR Ekachai, Daradirek
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ABSTRACT

Noting that most basic communication textbooks do not include a cultural diversity component, this paper presents 14 experiential exercises aimed to integrate the multicultural issues related to interpersonal communication topics. The various experiential activities are adapted from intercultural communication textbooks, cross-cultural training books, professional training workshops, and trainer's manuals, and can be used to integrate diversity when teaching the basic course in interpersonal communication. The activities in the paper are presented in a modular format--each module contains an objective, time required, materials needed, procedure, debriefing, and the source of the exercise. Topics of the activities in the paper include self-concept and identity, perception and culture, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, beliefs and value systems, nonverbal communication, listening, adaptation, and culture shock. Contains 19 references and 14 notes. (RS)

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Incorporating Multicultural Perspectives in the Basic Interpersonal Communication Course: Experiential Activities Approach

by

Daradirek Ekachai, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
Department of Speech Communication
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Carbondale, IL 62901
Tel: (618)453-2291
Fax: (618)453-2812
GA4006@SIUCVMB.SIU.EDU

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Incorporating Multicultural Perspectives in the Basic Interpersonal Communication Course: Experiential Activities Approach

Background

A 1990 Census Bureau report shows that 14 percent of the U.S. residents speak languages other than English at home, up from 11 percent a decade ago.[1] In California, about 32 percent spoke a language other than English at home. In Los Angeles County, Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics together constitute nearly 59% of the population. Further, cities where more than half of the residents are foreign-born include Hialeah, Fla. (70%), Miami (60%), Huntington Park, Calif. (59%), Union City, N.J. (55%), and Miami Beach, Fla. (51%).[2]

America's changing demographics, indicated by the above statistics, are already visible in the nation's classrooms. More than 100 languages are spoken in the school systems of New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Fairfax County, Va.[3] By 1995, one-third of American public school students will be from minority groups, according to a study by The College Board and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.[4] In California, 41 percent of the entering freshman class at UCLA are of Asian descent. At Berkeley, Asians totaled 33.6 percent of the university's enrollments.[5]

The increasing number of minorities, while the white majority starts to shrink, has caused concerns among educators to emphasize the issue of teaching diversity or integrating cultural pluralism at

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[1] "English Less Common at Home," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 28, 1993, 7A.
[2] "The Number Game," *Time* (Special Issue: The New Face of America), Fall, 1993, Vol. 142, No. 21, 14-15.
[3] "The Number Game," *Time*.
[4] "Increase Predicted in Minority Students," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 13, 1991, 9.
[5] Walsh, J. (1993). The perils of success. *Time* (Special issue), September.

every level of education. The increasing multicultural student body has prompted teachers, school administrators and policy makers to redefine school programs and curricula to be more inclusive and sensitive to all cultures. Content integration is among many developments seen in the multicultural education movement.[6] According to Banks, teachers can integrate multicultural issues by using "examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate the key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline."[7]

Purpose of the Study

As communication teachers, we are obligated in preparing students with intercultural communication knowledge and skills so that they can communicate effectively with today's multicultural society. Communication teachers can help develop a multicultural perspective by incorporating materials into the courses that will enable students to recognize, tolerate and/or appreciate cultural diversity without feeling divisive or antagonistic to those who are different from them. Given that, at many universities, not all students are required to take a course in intercultural communication, integrating multicultural communication issues in a basic communication course is an essential step to bring to large population of undergraduates the issues of cultural diversity and the development of intercultural communication skills.

This paper presents various experiential activities (i.e., games, simulations, role-plays) that communication instructors may

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[6] Banks, J.A. (1993). Multicultural education: Developments, dimensions, and challenges. *Phi Delta Kappan*, September, 22-28. Other dimensions include the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure.

[7] Banks, J.A. (1993). Multicultural education.

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use to integrate diversity when teaching the basic course in interpersonal communication. These activities were drawn and/or adapted from various sources such as intercultural communication textbooks, cross-cultural training books, professional training workshops, and trainer's manuals. In addition, potential problems that might occur when presenting experiential activities will also be discussed.

Content Integration

The idea to include a unit of intercultural communication in the basic communication course has been strongly endorsed every year since 1987 by the Speech Communication Association's directors of basic communication courses, but no substantial progress has been done.[8] Further, until recently, most basic communication textbooks did not include the cultural diversity component related to topics covered in those texts.[9]

This paper attempts to fill that void by presenting experiential exercises aimed to integrate the multicultural issues related to interpersonal communication topics. The paper organizes existing experiential activities conducted in cross-cultural training workshops as well as in intercultural communication classes into modules with topics consistent with those found in most basic interpersonal communication texts. The topics include self-concept and identity, perception (including ethnocentrism and stereotypes),

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[8] Asuncion-Lande, N.B. (1992). Intercultural communication in the basic communication course. Paper presented at a short course on "Valuing Cultural Diversity" at the SCA's 1992 annual convention, Chicago, IL.

[9] The most recent texts in basic communication included: Berko, R., Rosenfeld, L. & Samovar, L. (1994). *Connecting: A cultural sensitive approach to interpersonal communication competence*. Harcourt Brace & Company; Gamble, T & Gamble, M. (1994). *Public Speaking: In the age of diversity*. Allyn & Bacon.

beliefs and values, nonverbal communication, listening, and adaptation.

Using Experiential Activities as Instructional Strategy

The predominant pedagogy that many intercultural communication professors used in teaching intercultural communication has been information/knowledge based, cognitive learning, using lecture/discussions, readings, film and other multi-media presentations. However, scholars in intercultural communication have suggested that instructional methods should also include affective and behavioral components in learning through the use of such experiential activities as field studies, actual encounters, simulations, games and role plays.[10] Also useful is the use of critical incidents or case analysis, designed to "identify central issues in cross-cultural interaction, no matter the exact place where any one incident takes place."[11]

While many found the use of experiential activities beneficial in learning intercultural differences, Pedersen and Howell cautioned teachers and trainers that they also have some pitfalls. One criticism is that the experiential exercises are culture-bound.

> American students are trained and experienced in role-taking and game playing for educational purposes from kindergarten through college, and after, in vocational training. American facilitators unconsciously assume that visitors from other cultures have had equivalent experiences, which is usually not the case.[12]

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[10]Gudykunst, W. et al. (1991). Taming the beast: Designing a course in intercultural communication. *Communication Education, 40,* 272-285; Hoopes, D. & Ventura, P. (1979). *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-cultural training methodologies.* Washington, D.C.: Society for Intercultural Training, Education, and Research.

[11] Brislin, R. et al. (1986). *Intercultural interactions: A practical guide.* Sage.

[12] Pedersen, P.B. and Howell, W. (1979). Pros and cons of using structured exercises in intercultural groups. In W.H. Weeks, P.B. Pedersen, & R.W. Brislin (eds.) *A manual of structured experiences for cross-cultural learning.* The International Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, xiv-xv.

In addition, experiential exercises assume that openness and communication are good and contribute to understanding. This may violate other cultures' beliefs that value silence and self-restraint. Further, to role-play the other person's culture effectively, one must have many years of experience or thorough knowledge of the person's culture.

At any rate, when carefully delivered, Pedersen and Howell acknowledged that the experiential activities would provide "a means for the intercultural group participant and leader to increase their learning and define favorable outcomes for themselves."

The following pages present activities in modular format. Each module contains an objective, time required, materials needed, procedure, debriefing, and the source of the exercise.

Topic: Icebreaker Activity

Title: "Find a Person Who ..."

Objective: To introduce students to each other through cultural-related questions.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Instruction Slips (See examples below)

Procedure:

1. Give three instruction slips to each student and ask them to find a person who would match each instruction. Make sure everybody has different instruction slips. If students outnumber the slips, fewer instructions may be given to each student (one or two slips instead of three).

2. Ask students to get the following information from the matching person: Name, major, class in school, hometown, family, hobby, career goal, and any comment about the thing mentioned in the instruction.

3. Have students report the information.

Debrief: 1. This fun exercise is an alternative to a usually plain students' self-introduction. In addition to basic information about the students, their cultural-related information or interest is also given.

2.It is possible that some students may not be able to find a person who could match any of their instruction slips. If that is the case, ask students to discuss what the reasons might be.

<u>Suggested ideas for instruction slips</u>:

1. Find a person who can speak a foreign language.
2. Find a person who has been to another country.
3. Find a person who likes sushi.
4. Find a person who owns a kimono.
5. Find a person who has had "Pad Thai."
6. Find a person who has seen "The Joy Luck Club" movie.
7. Find a person who has seen "Schindler's List" movie.
8. Find a person who knows how to make a curry dish.
9. Find a person who has been to a Japanese tea ceremony.
10. Find a person who has been to a wedding of another culture.
11. Find a person who has received money in a red envelope.
12. Find a person who knows what the Kwanza celebration is.
13. Find a person who knows what the Ramadan is.
14. Find a person who knows how to use chopsticks.
15. Find a person who has had soul food.
16. Find a person whose hometown has fewer than 500 residents.
17. Find a person who knows the sign language.
18. Find a person who knows what Tai Chi is.

Source: Adapted from a workshop exercise at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The original source is unknown.

Topic: Self-Concept and Identity

Title: "Identity Molecule"

Objective: To identify one's own self-concept and identity. Students will learn that one can belong to many cultural groups.

Time: 30 minutes
Materials: "Identity Molecule" handout.

Procedure:

1. Have students complete the Identity Molecule by writing their name in big circle in the middle. In smaller circles, ask students to write names of different groups with which they identify(Ex: female).

2. Ask students to draw an asterisk sign above ONE group they consider to be their PRIMARY source of identification.

3. Teacher read a list of different groups (shown below), one by one, and ask students to stand up when one of their groups (in the molecule) is read. Ask students to remain standing if the group is their primary source of identification.

4. Ask students, who have remained standing, to sit down before reading the next group on the list.

Suggested Identity Groups

Teacher's question" "Among the eight identity groups you identify in the circle, is any of those related with the following category? Then read the list. After students stood up and sat down, ask "Is this your primary group you strongly identify with?"

1. gender (male, female)
2. religion
3. race
4. ethnic origin
5. national origin
6. profession
7. family role (parent, son, etc.)
8. friend
9. college/school affiliation
10. volunteer activities
11. personal interest, hobby
12. political belief
13. physical ability
14. sexual orientation
15. socio-economic status
16. Ask is anyone has another group not covered in the list

Debrief: When students stand up when their group was called, it means they identify themselves with the same broad category (Ex. a religious group) but not necessarily the same specific group (Ex. a Catholic vs. a Lutheran). The point here is that with many group identities people see themselves, we may find "things we have in common" across specific groups (Ex. the religious group is their primary source of personal identity.)

Source: Adapted from a "Prejudice Awareness Campaign" workshop conducted by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Washington, D.C.

Topic: Self-concept and Identity

Title: Ups and Downs

Objective: To acknowledge that people belong to many groups simultaneously.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials: None

Procedure:

Call out the name of a group and ask students who identify with that group to stand. The rest will remain seated and applaud and the people standing will then sit. Repeat the process for each group on the list.

Suggested groups:

1. women
2. men
3. White
4. White men
5. African-Americans
6. African-Americans over 30
7. parents
8. single parents
9. snorers
10. nail biters
11. people who work with computer
12. people who like to fish
13. cat lovers
14. animal right activists
15. women under 5 feet 3 inches (petite size)
16. twins
17. Left-handers
18. First-borns
19. Bilingual
20. Speak a language other than English at home
21. know somebody who has or died from AIDS
22. came from rural area
23. foreign-born
24. have interracial relationship
25. a second generation immigrants to the U.S.

Debrief: This exercise, which is fun to do and high spirited, points out that differences come in many forms, that one group is not better than another, and that it is OK to be a part of many different groups.

Source: Adapted from Myers, S. & Lambert, J. (1990). Managing cultural diversity: A trainer's guide. Intercultural Development Inc. Solona Beach, CA.

Topic: Perception and Culture

Title: Seeing is believing or is it?

Objective: To demonstrate that the way a person see things is a selective process and is often culturally determined.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Handouts: "Spiral," "Which Line is Shorter?" and "Nine Dots." (See Appendix 1)

Procedure:

"Spiral" Handout:

1. Ask students to look carefully at the spiral handout and think about whether it looks like it is going clockwise or counter clockwise.

2. As students respond, suggest that they check the direction by putting their finger on one of the lines and tracing it all the way around one full turn (360 degrees).

3. Discuss what they have found. (They will have discovered that it's not a spiral at all.)

"Which line is shorter?" Handout

1. Ask students to look at the two lines and decide which line is shorter. (Answer: The bottom line may look shorter but it is actually longer.)

2. As students respond, explain that not only we can be fooled by circles but by straight line as well.

3. Ask for any comments from the group.

"Nine Dots" Handout

1. Ask students to connect all nine dots with a straight line without lifting a pencil. They can cross another line but cannot retrace a line.

2. Discuss why some students could do the task while others couldn't.

Debrief: These three exercises illustrate how culture could affect our perception. For example, when doing the nine dots exercise, we were culturally trained to see a square, hence, we would try to accomplish the task by connecting the line without going beyond the square.

Source: "Spiral" and "Which line is Shorter?" are from Myers, S. & Lambert, J. (1990). Managing cultural diversity: A trainer's guide. Intercultural Development Inc. Solona Beach, CA. "Nine Dots" exercise is from Cardot, J.J. & Dodd, C.H. (1991). Instructor's manual for dynamics of intercultural communication. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown.

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Topic: Stereotyping

Title: Lemon Exercise

Objective: To introduce the concept of stereotyping and illustrate how generalizations influence our thinking.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: One lemon for each group of 5-8 students

Procedure:

1. Put all lemons out on a table where everyone can see them.

2. Ask students to tell you characteristics of lemon (e.g., yellow, citrus, fruit, has pits).

3. Make a list of all the characteristics of lemons on the chalkboard

4. Give each group of students one lemon. Ask them to study "their" lemon and to make a note of all special markings on it.

5. Collect all the lemons and put them out on the table again.

6. Ask one person from each group to come up to the front and pick out that group's lemon. This usually presents no problem. "Their" lemon has become distinct and individual.

7. Ask for comments from the group about the process.

Debrief:

The point of the exercise is to show how easy it is to group things and people into categories without paying attention to individual characteristics. There is little danger in doing this with objects, but when we do this with people, it is called stereotyping and it can prevent us from seeing people as individuals.

Source: Adapted from a "Prejudice Awareness Campaign" workshop conducted by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Washington, D.C.

Topic: Perception and Stereotyping

Title: The Stranger

Objective: To explore the bases we use in perceiving and making judgments about people we see for the first time.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: The instructor must bring to class an individual who is unfamiliar to the students in the class. In other words, invite a friend, colleague, or relative.

Procedure:
1. Ask students to look the person over and answer the following questions by placing a check mark in the chosen spaces under the first column.

2. Next, students will be given an opportunity to interact with the stranger. They may ask no more than 5 questions of the stranger, but the instructor must tell students NOT to ask questions that directly pertain to the questions below.

3. Based on that interaction, ask students to answer the questions below again. Mark the responses in the second column.

What is the stranger's:	First	Second
1) age	_____	_____
2) occupation	_____	_____
3) highest educational level reached	_____	_____
4) marital status	_____	_____
5) financial status	_____	_____
6) political orientation	_____	_____

THE STRANGER WOULD MOST LIKELY:

1. Enjoy ....

___ ___ reading a romance novel
___ ___ reading poetry
___ ___ watching sports on TV
___ ___ seeing a mystery movie
___ ___ watching TV news
___ ___ seeing a foreign film
___ ___ watching a TV situation comedy
___ ___ eating ethnic foods

2. Listen to ....

___ ___ classical music
___ ___ classic rock
___ ___ country-western
___ ___ top 40/pop
___ ___ hard rock/metal
___ ___ rap
___ ___ jazz
___ ___ reggae

3. Prefer to be ....

___ ___ alone
___ ___ in a crowd
___ ___ with one person

4. Act ....

___ ___ aggressively
___ ___ assertively
___ ___ non-assertively

5. Go to ....

___ ___ a rock concert
___ ___ an art museum
___ ___ a baseball game
___ ___ an opera
___ ___ a play
___ ___ a movie

6. Look for in a mate ....

___ ___ obedience
___ ___ intelligence
___ ___ looks
___ ___ personality
___ ___ money
___ ___ ethnic similarity

7. Be ....

___ ___ very energetic
___ ___ very lazy
___ ___ fairly energetic
___ ___ fairly lazy

8. Behave in most situations ...

___ ___ very emotionally
___ ___ very rationally
___ ___ fairly emotionally
___ ___ fairly rationally

4. Ask some students to read their judgments and predictions to the group and discuss why they made them.

Debrief: The discussion that concludes this exercise should focus on the following questions:

How accurate were the predictions and perceptions?
How did they reflect the attitudes of the predictors?
Did their perceptions of the stranger change after they talked to him/her?
Did any stereotyping occur in their first and second reading of the stranger?
How frequently in real life do we make stereotypical judgments of a person based on insufficient information?

Source: Adapted from Pusch, M.D. (1979). Multicultural education: A cross-cultural training approach, (ed.), Intercultural Press: 112-3.

Topic: Ethnocentrism

Title: "Our Way is the Right Way"

Objective: To illustrate the effect of ethnocentrism on interpersonal and intercultural communication.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Ask students to write on a sheet of paper what their culture sees as the appropriate or right way of doing the followings:

a. Eating (how, when, with whom, with what utensils)
b. Bathing (how, where, how often, with whom)
c. Personal hygiene (what to clean or not clean, use of deodorants or perfume, teeth cleaning, etc.)
d. Types of food (what is edible and nonedible, what smells what doesn't smell)
e. Sleeping (how, where, with whom)
f. Driving a car (who, which side of the road, how fast)
g. Greeting someone (how, to whom, when, who greets first)
h. Clothing (male's and female's formal and informal clothes, colors, style)
i. Praying (when, with whom, where, how often)

2. Ask students to share some of their responses. List their responses on the chalkboard, perhaps arranging them by culture (if the class is culturally mixed). Ask students to explain particular behaviors carried out by members of their culture.

3.Ask students to share their thoughts about some of their classmates' responses. Which responses do they perceive as strange, not the "right" way or even offensive?

Debrief:

In the conclusion of the exercise, discuss how we typically use our own cultural experiences and culturally sanctioned ways of behaving when evaluating the most mundane and basic daily tasks performed by members of other cultures.

Source: Adapted from Lustig, M.W., Koester, J., Dyer, S. & Skow, L.M. (1993). Instructor's manual to accompany Intercultural communication competence: Interpersonal communication across culture, by Lustig. M.W. & Koester, J., Harper Collins.

Topic: Stereotypes

Title: First Thoughts

Objective: To examine common generalizations or stereotypes as applied to groups of people.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Flip chart, markers, tape, and slips of paper containing names of different groups. Procedure:

1. Divide students in to groups of three.

2. Give each group a slip of paper containing a name of a group (e.g., Italians, African-Americans, White males, women, Native Americans, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, elderly, gays, disabled. The list is not exhaustive; other groups may be added depending on the demography or size of the class.)

3. Ask them to write on a page from the flip chart their "first thoughts" (in adjectives) which come to mind about that group. Ask them to be candid and write their first thoughts, positive or negative. Tell them that they do not have to personally believe each of the stereotypes, but it is important to get them listed.

4. Ask the groups to tape their flip chart page on the wall so everyone can see.

5. Ask each group to read the list to the large group.

6. After the groups' reports, ask for their reactions to the exercise and to stereotyping in general. For example, they can discuss the words used in each category, which category was easy and which was difficult, which category had more positive adjectives, which had a lot of negative adjectives and why.

Debrief:

1. After completing the exercise, students should recognize that stereotypes is unfair, usually false, and a barrier to good communication.

2. Discuss where these stereotypes come from (i.e., parents, family beliefs, mass media, school, friends, personal experience).

3. Discuss the importance of overcoming labels and stereotypes and ask the group for ways to counteract stereotypes.

Sources: Adapted from Myers, S. & Lambert, J. (1990). Managing cultural diversity: A trainer's guide. Intercultural Development Inc. Solona Beach, CA, and a workshop on "Multicultural issues for Journalism Educators," at the annual convention of the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication, August 13, 1993.

Topic: Beliefs and Values Systems

Title: The Albatross Culture[13]

Objective: 1. To increase students' awareness of phenomena that occur between groups with different value systems.

2. To involve students in a simulated society in which they encounter persons very different from themselves.

Time: About one hour.

Materials: A copy of Albatross role description sheet for each role play. (See next page)

Setting: Two adjacent rooms, each large enough to accommodate all students.

Procedure:

1. The instructor chooses two students, one male one female, to act in a role play involving a simulated culture. Each role player is given a copy of the Albatross role description sheet to prepare for the role play. The instructor emphasizes that the role-playing activity is to be nonverbal, that the role players are to express themselves in action, not words. The role players go into another room.

2. The instructor then asks for 4-6 volunteers to be "guests" in the role play. The remaining students are designated as observers.

3. The instructor instructs the guests as follows:

> "You are about to be involved in an activity concerning cultural norms and values. When you walk into the next room, you will be entering a new culture--the culture of Albatross. You are a guest in this new culture. Because this is a nonverbal activity, please do not talk after entering the Albatross culture."

4. The guests and the observers are directed to the other room, where the role play begins.

5. After the role play has ended, the observers, as a group, take 10 minutes to list various cultural traits that they think were demonstrated during the role play. The instructor lists these traits on the chalkboard. Then the role players explain, in Albatross terms, each trait the group listed correctly.

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[13]For more detailed information on this simulation, see Gochenour, T. (1977). "The Albatross," in D. Batchelder and E. Warner (Eds.), *Beyond experience: The experiential approach to cross-cultural education*. Brattleboro, VT: The Experiment Press, 131-135. Another similar simulation designed to increase intercultural communication skills is *Bafa Bafa*, published by Simile II, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, CA, 92014.

6. The instructor asks the guests to describe their reactions or feelings when they were greeted the Albatross ways.

7. Finally, the instructor leads the total group in a discussion about the misunderstandings that may occur between groups with different value systems. Depending on the interests of the students, the discussion may include black-white, male-female, teacher-student, Arab-Israeli, Western-Eastern value systems. Individual ethnocentrism and feelings of trust, empathy, disgust, hostility, and fear can also be discussed.

Albatross Role-Description Sheet

You live in a culture called Albatross. The Albatrossian culture is viewed as counter-American because each custom is either physically or intellectually opposed to traditional, middle-class American customs or ways of thinking. The following are two examples of the Albatross customs:

1. When greeting a guest, the Albatrossian removes that person's right shoes and briefly massage the foot. Even though the right foot, in the Albatrossian view, is not considered more important than the left foot, the Albatrossian people tend to use their right foot more. In other words, the Albatrossians do not believe (as opposed to the American point of view) that there must be a reason for every important custom.

2. Being second in the Albatrossian culture is more important than being the first because Albatrossians view the natural world as full of dangers and fears. Hence, to be served second or to be greeted second is to be protected from potential dangers (poisoned food, an unknown enemy). Thus males are always greeted and served first; females are served last.

This is a nonverbal activity. You are to illustrate Albatrossian customs in all your actions, including your guests.

Sources: Fromkin, H.L. & Sherwood, J.J. (1976). Intergroup and minority relations: An experiential handbook. La Jolla, CA: University Associates, 109-111; and Gochenour, T. (1977). "The Albatross," in D. Batchelder and E. Warner (Eds.), Beyond experience: The experiential approach to cross-cultural education. Brattleboro, VT: The Experiment Press, 131-135.

Topic: Nonverbal Communication

Title: Emotional Role Play

Objective: To show how similar emotions are nonverbally expressed differently or similarly across different cultures.

Time: Variable; depending on group size, length of pantomimes, and processing phase.

Procedure:
1. Ask for volunteers to pantomime a particular emotion.

2. Each volunteer or person assigned will then select the emotions of embarrassment, happy, sad, anger, fear, hate, love, envy, frustration, nervousness, surprise, etc.

3. Each volunteer will then pantomime nonverbally that emotion to the group.

4. The rest of the class will be asked to guess what emotion he/she is acting out.

5. Discussion follows in regard to how emotions are expressed and interpreted similarly or differently across different cultures.

Source: Developed by Paul Pedersen. Cited in R. W. Brislin, K. Cushner, C. Cherrie, & M. Yong. (1986). Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide. Sage Publications.

Topic: Nonverbal Communication

Title: Communicating Our Way

Objective: To demonstrate that a person's own communication styles are also influenced by culture.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Instruction Slips (see next page)

Procedure:

1. Make enough copies of Instruction Slips and cut so each student receives one instruction: A, B, C, or D.

2. After giving each participant one slip, instruct students not to share their rules with anyone.

3. Ask students to pair up, preferably A's talking to B's and C's talking to D's.

4. Ask the pairs to talk to each other for two minutes, following instructions they received. Their task is to find out three new things about their partner.

Debrief:

1. After the exercise is done, ask students if they found the exercise easy and solicit their first reaction to the assignment.

2. List their response on the chalkboard.

3. Have one student from each category (A, B, C, D) read his or her rules aloud to the group. As the rules are read, list the following nonverbal communication issues on the chalkboard: 1) Eye contact and showing of emotion; 2) Distance and gestures; 3) Loudness and interruptions; 4) Softness and no interruptions; 5)Initiating conversation and personal questions

4. Ask how the students interpreted the behavior of their partners during the exercise (for example, the student's partner who looked away felt that the partner couldn't be trusted, was not interested or perhaps was bored.

Debrief:

The exercise illustrates that there is a "mainstream" American communication style and that many different cultures bring with them their own rules and communication styles which are different. The more a person understands differences in communication styles, the better communication can become.

Source: Adapted from Myers, S. & Lambert, J. (1990). Managing cultural diversity: A trainer's guide. Intercultural Development Inc.

Instruction Slips for "Communicating Our Way"

These instructions should be copied and cut into strips. Enough should be made so that each participant can be given one strip.

Group A Instructions

-- Avoid eye-contact when speaking to your partner

-- Do not show any emotion or react to your partner when he or she is speaking.

Group B Instructions

-- Stand about 6 inches closer to your partner than you normally would.

-- Touch your partner when you want to express your friendliness.

-- Use gestures often when you are speaking.

Group C Instructions

-- Speak more loudly than you normally would and interrupt your partner fairly frequently.

-- Ask a lot of questions, including personal ones.

Group D Instructions

-- Speak more softly than you normally would.

-- Seldom initiate conversation or ask questions

-- Smile a lot even though you don't understand or disagree with what your partner.
said.

Topic: Listening

Title: Culture and Listening

Objective: To practice listening to verbal and nonverbal messages, summarizing what was "heard" and checking the accuracy of the message received with the speaker.

Time: Variable

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. The class is broken into groups of from 4 to 8 people.

2. Two members of each group volunteer to engage in a conversation; the rest of the group observes. One of the volunteers picks a subject he or she feels is very important, possibly some aspect of religion, politics, male-female relations, career goals, etc., and begins to discuss it.

3. After 3-5 minutes, the second volunteer summarizes what the speaker has said.

4. Then the speaker confirms and/or corrects the listener's summary. The listener rephrases until able to state accurately what the speaker said.

5. The other members of the group then comment on the communication process they observed.

6. If time available, two other members of the group do the exercise until most or all have had a chance to participate.

7. When every group has completed the exercise, the whole class discusses the exercise together. The instructor draws out the difficulties people have in accurately hearing what is communicated to them. Students may be asked if they could identify any differences in culture or perception between the speaker and listener.

Debrief: The instructor may instruct students to distinguish between what is "said" and what is "meant." The intent is to enable the students to become better listeners by helping them learn to check their perceptions of what a person is saying. By getting at the meanings which are not obvious, the listener avoids inserting his or her own meanings and feelings into what was said.

Source: Original source: Paul Pedersen. Cited in Pusch, M.D. (1979). Multicultural education: A cross-cultural training approach, (ed.), Intercultural Press: 165.

Topic: Adaptation

Title: Culture Shock Role Play

Objective: To help students to define and understand the kinds of roles individuals must adapt to in new cultures.

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials: Two scenario problems with solutions

Procedure:

1. Divide students into two groups, each is given a problem with five solutions. Ask students to discuss solutions in terms of whether or not they feel the solution helps or hinders the person's image and is appropriate to the situation.

2. Ask each group to select from the five solutions the one that most appeals to them.

3. Roles appropriate to each problem are then assigned in each group and the problem is 'played-out.'

Following the role playing, each group is allowed to defend its position and a vote is taken of all students regarding the best solution.

Problem One

An international student had an argument with his host family. He felt that the whole family was demanding too much of his time and attention. The family in turn felt the guest was being discourteous and demanding special treatment that they would not give to their own children. The arguments became so oppressive that they affected the student's grades.

Solutions

1. I would make some excuse and leave the host family and find another place to live.

2. I would confront the host family and tell them they were taking too much time and tell them to give me more time to study.

3. I would rearrange my schedule and try to study more at the university and continue to let the family take up time.

4. I would do nothing and would accept it and do my best in school.

5. Or I would _____.

Scenario Two

An international student fails in his attempt to mix socially with U.S. Americans, and outs the blame on his ethnic identity. He debases the values of his own culture and rejects his countrymen, who in turn reject him. At the same time he is not more successful in communicating with U.S. Americans. He is isolated and feels lonely.

Solutions

1. I would accept living in a foreign country and realize I will be lonely.

2. I would seek help, preferably from other countrymen and counselors.

3. I would socialize with people from my own country and try to show them the stupidity of our values.

4. I would start over and try to mix socially with another group of U.S. Americans.

5. Or I would _____.

Source: W. H. Weeks, P. B. Pedersen, & R. W. Brislin. (1979). A Manual of Structured Experiences for Cross-Cultural Learning. SIETAR.

Topic: Culture Shock and Adaptation

Title: BARNGA[14]

Objective: 1. To simulate, by a card game, misperceptions and consequent communication difficulties when one enters a group that has different cultural rules. Communication problems are simulated by requiring players to interact only through gestures or pictures.

2. To show students that they must understand and reconcile these differences to function effectively in a cross-cultural group.

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials: Four to five card decks, the Tournament Guidesheets, "Five Tricks," and BARNGA manual which can be purchased from the Intercultural Press.

Setting: Set up the room with one table for each group. Set each table far enough away from the others to minimize groups overhearing each other. Place enough chairs around each table for the players. Place one numbered table sign and one modified deck of card on each table.

Procedure:

1. Divide students into small groups of 4-6. Each group sit at the arranged table. (The number of tables depends on the number of students in the class.

2. Each group receive a modified deck of cards (each deck containing only the same few cards) and a sheet of rules for playing a new card game called "Five Tricks." They have a few minutes to study the rules and practice playing the game. Be absolutely certain that each group receives a different set of rules, don't tell students that they have different set.

3. Once everyone has the hang of it, the instructor collects the rule sheets and at the same time imposes a strict command of "NO verbal communication." This means that students may gesture or draw pictures if the wish, but may neither speak (orally or by signing) nor write words.

4. Then the instructor announces a tournament. Let players keep the Tournament Guidesheets for reference. Give players in each group a few minutes to play in their home groups. Tell them to keep score as described on the Tournament Guidesheets.

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[14] Thiagarajan, S. (1990). *BARNGA: A simulation game on cultural clashes.* Intercultural Press, Inc. The complete set of Barnga with manual can be purchased from Intercultural Press, Inc., P.O. Box 700, Yarmouth, ME 04096. Tel: (207)846-5168.

5. Each round lasts a few minutes. At the end of each round, players moves as outlined on the guidesheet (winner moves up to higher numbered table, loser moves down to lower numbered table). Instructor should expect some confusion, DO NOT HELP THEM! Just tell them to move according to their best understanding of the Guidesheets, and to begin at once playing "Five Tricks" again.

6. When players moved to the new table, not knowing that the card game is played with different rules, players are expected to express misunderstanding and frustration. The instructor should stay neutral, and enforce no verbal communication.

7. Depending on how much time the class has, hold at least three or four rounds. Then announce that the game is over.

8. After revealing the differences in the "five Tricks" rules, ask students what they think about the game and what they think was going on.

Debrief:

Ask students to remember what was going through their minds and how they felt when they were playing BARNGA. The instructor may ask the following questions:

Did what you were thinking and feeling change during play?

What were your greatest frustrations or successes?

Did you try to adapt to the new rules of different tables?

What are some problems which arose during play?

What specific real-life situations does BARNGA simulate?

Have you ever had similar experiences?

What does the game experience suggest about what to do when you are in the situation in the real world?

Conclusion

This paper adapts and organizes existing experiential activities for communication teachers to integrate multicultural issues or topics in the basic interpersonal communication class. Fourteen exercises, by no means sufficient to cover every topic discussed in the basic course, are presented as some examples that instructors may use to include in their classrooms. It is hoped that, along with lectures, case studies, discussions and other instructional methods, these experiential exercises would enhance students' cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral skills when they engage in the interpersonal communication across cultures.

Experiential activities, however, do have some shortcomings. As cautioned by experts in cross-cultural training, instructors must be aware of the limitations, being culture-bound, western-oriented pedagogy, that might violate students' sensitivity and personal identity. Essential to the success of the use of experiential activities, therefore, are careful planning on the administration of the exercises, cautious delivery and effective debriefing that connects what students learn from the exercises and the concepts or topics being presented.

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